

PRESS RELEASE

House Armed Services Committee Bob Stump, Chairman

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 20, 2001

CONTACT

Ryan Vaart

Meghan Wedd

(202) 225-2539

CHAIRMAN BOB STUMP ANNOUNCES HEARING ON THE VIEQUES TRAINING FACILITY

House Armed Services Committee Chairman Bob Stump (R-AZ) today announced plans to hold a hearing on the Navy training facility in Vieques, Puerto Rico. The hearing, which is scheduled for 10 a.m. on June 27 in 2118 Rayburn House Office Building, will feature Department of Defense witnesses to testify on the readiness implications of closing the Vieques training facility, whether there are effective training alternatives to Vieques, and the process by which the Navy reached the decision to close the Vieques training facility.

Said Stump, "The United States Navy has spent the better part of the past two years convincing Congress that Vieques is 'indispensable', 'the premier U.S. Navy training facility,' and its 'Crown Jewel' of training. I agree with these assessments and believe that the Vieques training range is an irreplaceable asset, the closure of which would severely damage the readiness of U.S. military forces.

"Next week's hearing is an opportunity for the Navy to convince us otherwise," continued Stump. "If the Navy wants the committee's support on this matter, they must first prove that the closure of Vieques will not damage military readiness, does not set a precedent by which other nations and communities will force the U.S. military to withdraw from critical training facilities around the world, and that the decision to leave Vieques was made for military – not political – reasons."

"I look forward to hearing the Navy's testimony, but until the service makes a compelling argument for closing Vieques, I will remain convinced that its decision is a step in the wrong direction," concluded Stump.

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